



HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES FORCES, KOREA

UNIT #15237

APO AP 96205-5237

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

25 AUG 2008

FKCS

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: US Forces Korea (USFK) Command Policy Letter #36, Activities during Yellow Sand Alert

1. This policy letter supersedes USFK Policy Letter #36 dated 23 Jan 08, same subject, and remains in effect until rescinded or superseded.

2. References.

a. DoD Directive 1010.10, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, 24 November 2003

b. DoD Directive 4715.1 E, Environment, Safety and Occupational Health, 19 March 2005.

c. DoD Directive 6200.4, Force Health Protection, 9 October 2004.

d. DoD Directive 6490.2, Comprehensive Health Surveillance, 21 October 2004.

e. DoD Instruction 4715.15, Environmental Quality Systems, 11 December 2006.

f. DoD Instruction 6055.1, DoD Safety and Occupational Health Program, 19 August 1998.

g. DoD Instruction 6055.5, Industrial Hygiene and Occupational Health, 10 January 1989.

h. DoD Manual 6055.5-My Occupational Medical Surveillance Manual, 4 May 1998.

i. AR 200-1, Environmental Protection and Enhancement, 21 February 1997.

3. This policy applies to all USFK personnel and family members.

4. Yellow Sand (also known as Yellow Dust or Asian Dust) is a seasonal meteorological phenomenon which affects much of East Asia periodically during the springtime months. This occurrence starts with a dust storm in the deserts of Mongolia and Northern China, which then moves and appears as a distinct yellow cloud in Korea. This event has a long history and has earned the local name **Hwangsa**, which means "Yellow Sand." High concentrations of Yellow Sand have affected the Korean Peninsula by obscuring visibility, causing health problems such as eye, nose, mouth, and throat irritation; and exacerbating respiratory and cardiovascular difficulties.

This letter can be found at <http://www.usfk.mil>

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5. This environmental threat impacts force health protection, unit safety and readiness, the well-being of USFK personnel and their family members -- and could jeopardize our "fight tonight" capability. We can manage this threat by learning to recognize particle pollution level warnings, and by following established protective measures. Risk mitigating procedures will be implemented by Commanders and leaders when unhealthy environmental factors outweigh mission requirements. All military and civilian leaders will learn to recognize and respond to this threat, and will employ risk management principles to mitigate the dangers caused by unhealthy Yellow Sand levels.

6. The Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA) performs Yellow Sand monitoring and forecasting. The KMA provides real-time Yellow Sand particulate concentration data for USFK's support activity areas; this data can be accessed via the 18th Medical Command Yellow Sand website <http://www.seoul.amedd.army.mil/sites/yellowsand/default.asp>. KMA also maintains an Asian Dust Warning System that provides Yellow Sand alert warnings to the 18th Medical Command and the Watch Team, Command Center Seoul (CC Seoul). CC Seoul issues alert notices to the Armed Forces Network-Korea (AFN-K), Area Commanders, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS)-Pacific when Yellow Sand concentrations reach unsafe levels.

7. USFK Commanders, the Superintendent of DoDDS-Pacific, and the Directors of Child Development Services will monitor particulate pollution forecasts and Yellow Sand data and will implement recommended protective measures for outdoor activities. For Yellow Sand Concentration in excess of 99 micrograms/m³, identify high-risk personnel and implement activity restrictions as shown below:

a. **Amber Yellow Sand Health Alert Code (100-199 micrograms/m³).** Reduce prolonged and heavy exertion outdoor activities for high-risk personnel when Yellow Sand concentration readings exceed 100 micrograms/m³ or when an *Amber* Yellow Sand Health Alert Code is issued.

b. **Blue Yellow Sand Health Alert Code or Watch (200-399 micrograms/m³).** High-risk personnel should not exercise or play outdoors and their outside physical activities should be limited to bare essentials; all other personnel should reduce prolonged and heavy exertion outdoor activities when Yellow Sand concentration readings exceed 200 micrograms/m³, or when a *Blue* Yellow Sand Health Alert Code or "Watch" is issued.

c. **Orange Yellow Sand Health Alert Code or Advisory (400-799 micrograms/m³).** Avoid all outdoor activities for high-risk personnel; cancel prolonged and heavy exertion outdoor activities (including Physical Training) for all others, when Yellow Sand concentration readings exceed 400 micrograms/m³, or when an *Orange* Yellow Sand Health Alert Code or "Advisory" is issued. Commanders will not conduct outside Physical Training (PT) when concentrations reach or exceed the 400 microgram/m³ level and will limit outdoor field training to only the most essential activities, and minimize the exposure time of service members to unfiltered air.

d. **Purple Yellow Sand Health Alert Code or Warning (800 micrograms/m³ or Greater).** All USFK personnel and family members will remain indoors, at reduced activity levels,

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unless mission dictates otherwise, when Yellow Sand concentration readings exceed 800 micrograms/m³, or when a *Purple* Yellow Sand Health Alert Code or "Warning" is issued. All outside training activities will be prohibited under these conditions. Training will be conducted indoors or delayed/cancelled until Yellow Sand concentration levels are reduced to safer levels.

8. These measures will empower leaders to protect USFK personnel and family members from this unhealthy seasonal phenomenon. I challenge each of you to become familiar with the Yellow Sand Activity monitoring system, and to implement the appropriate activity restriction recommendations and protective procedures during high concentrations of Yellow Sand. I further charge Commanders and leaders with the responsibility of assimilating Yellow Sand activity information recommendations into their Risk Management, Health Promotion, and Injury Prevention plans.

9. Questions regarding this policy should be referred to the USFK Office of the Command Surgeon, DSN 724-3144; E-mail: fksg@korea.army.mil.



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